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ABSTRACT

The various ways of expanding the 4-H nutrition education program through team work are discussed. The need is stressed to consider "balance" in the 4-H nutrition efforts, regardless of income levels, race, color, sex, or national origin. The primary objectives of the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program is to help hard-to-reach families acquire the knowledge, skills, and changed behavior necessary to achieve a more balanced diet. The Extension aide may serve as a resource person to teach food-nutrition subject matter to low income, disadvantaged youth in 4-H and other youth groups; help identity and recruit volunteers to work with youth; assist with training volunteers; and serve as a liaison between the volunteer, extension staff and community resources. If the aide is to function as a link in serving low income families, it is only realistic that the home economist and the 4-H staff share some joint responsibilities in the initial training of aides and their continuous in-service and consultation training. (Author/LS)

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EXPANDING 4-H NUTRITION EDUCATION THROUGH A TEAM APPROACH*

by
Edwin L. Kirby, Administrator
Extension Service, USDA

I am delighted with the opportunity to talk with you about the many ways we have of expanding 4-H nutrition education programs through a team approach. You can be proud of your accomplishments to date and of the favorable acceptance of this program effort.

Enrollment in 4-H food-nutrition projects this past year included over 709,000 boys and girls plus some 200,000 additional youth participating in the Expanded Nutrition Education Program as of August 31. Since the beginning of this expanded program, the program aides have worked with 786,834 families containing more than 3 million persons. We know that children in these families are better fed because of the combined educational efforts of you, the aides, and volunteers. Over 10,000 volunteers have assisted with the youth phase of the EFNEP since July 1, 1970. This work is being conducted in more than 1,000 counties, independent cities and Indian reservations.

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*Presentation at National Training Workshop on 4-H Nutrition Education, Dallas, Texas, December 18, 1970.

It has been through your leadership ability and personal commitment to solving human problems that we can speak about this progress as a reality of program growth. Extension workers at all levels have surmounted many obstacles in adapting programs and resources to reach a concentration of low-income audiences with nutrition education.

Our first concentrated attempt was made this past year to aggressively move 4-H nutrition programs into the inner city with Federal resources. Even with some additional professional staff, we recognize that it has been a difficult year to make some of these adjustments. You have made remarkable progress! We are very proud of an Extension staff who has this kind of expertise in organizational management, subject matter, and teaching skills. This progress broadens the opportunities for continued expansion of 4-H in the 70's.

We are very conscious of the effort required to maximize the scope of the youth phase of the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program. We note that you are also concerned about the total 4-H food-nutrition program. I am sure your concern for up-dating

all phases of the 4-H food nutrition program will be reflected in plans of each State team attending this Conference.

I will comment briefly on the need to consider balance in our 4-H nutrition efforts, regardless of income levels, race, color, sex, or national origin.

BALANCED PROGRAM IN 4-H NUTRITION EDUCATION

As you consider priorities in terms of audiences and other specific aspects of the 4-H food-nutrition program, I challenge each of you to work toward a balance in our 4-H nutrition education programs. I am speaking of a balance where we give attention to groups who have urgent needs with limited resources as well as others who also need what 4-H has to offer.

Let's look in more detail at the following characteristics of youth audiences who have great need for 4-H nutrition education programs.

*Socio-Economic Groups-- In recent years, Extension has helped low-income, disadvantaged families make more progress in solving problems related to

nutrition than in any other subject matter area. The opportunity and need for expansion are limited only by our imagination and continued commitment to reaching low-income youth with nutrition assistance. You and other Extension workers are using a wide variety of ways in which youth can participate in 4-H nutrition education programs. We need this kind of thinking and planning. Such innovation is needed to expand nutrition programs which are relevant to the home and social environment of low-income youth.

*Ethnic and Race -- We are very pleased with the progress made toward expanded 4-H participation with minority groups. This has produced a new dedication to continue the search for ways and means to encourage even greater participation of minority groups in our total 4-H nutrition education program. It is at the young age where we can help create understanding among individuals of all races. This may be one of the great "spin-offs" from the youth dimension of the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program.

*Age -- How much attention has been given to teens in 4-H nutrition education programs? Presently, highest enrollment and greatest concentration of 4-H nutrition efforts have been with 9 - 12 year olds. The response of this age group to 4-H EFNEP has been fantastic -- even 7 and 8 year olds have been involved in some very creative and educational nutrition experiences!

But what about the needs of teenage youth? As we reexamine our priorities, can we afford to devote so much of our resources to the 9 - 12 year olds at the expense of the teenage group? As you have heard this week, adolescents have some real nutritional needs. This is especially true of teenage girls, and these problems are not limited to a specific income level. In spite of the efforts which Dr. Spindler and others of you have put on this problem, it still challenges us. USDA studies identified adolescent girls as one of the four audiences in most need of improved nutrition. Good nutrition is especially important to the older teen girl. Many of them are

or will soon be bearing children and their own nutritional level will directly affect the well-being and health of their children.

*Sex -- Where do boys get their nutrition information? Are they supposed to obtain their knowledge through casual association with family and friends? There is a need for creative and imaginative programming for boys. We must make certain that 4-H nutrition education is not an all girls' program.

Many disadvantaged youth are from one-parent families, where the male is absent from the family. We are encouraged by your consistent efforts in recruiting male volunteers in the program. Some programs have been successful in employing selected male aides to work on specific areas of the nutrition program. In addition to the subject-matter which they teach, they also serve in a model role encouraging application of nutrition information taught to youth.

*Place of Residence -- Let us not forget or deemphasize our responsibility to rural youth but at the same time look critically at our present opportunity to expand 4-H nutrition education in urban areas,

particularly the depressed areas of our cities. The success which we make in this endeavor may very well be the proving ground for additional resources for a total 4-H youth development program in our cities. The potential is encouraging!

*Innovation and Change in 4-H -- Another type of balance to which we should look carefully is a balance between the new and the old of 4-H --- an interweaving between what 4-H has been and what 4-H should be in today's world in which youth find themselves. Many times we tend to think of innovators as those who contribute to a new way of doing things. But many changes within our 4-H program have been touched off by those who contributed to a new way of thinking about things. We need new ways of thinking about 4-H nutrition education and new ways of implementing the program. We must continue to strive for compatibility of this concept of flexibility in 4-H food-nutrition programming and yet maintain depth of programming that will lead to the total development of our youth.

THE TEAM APPROACH

Interdisciplinary Approach to Solving Nutritional Problems of Youth

An interdisciplinary or team approach has been part of the 4-H program since its inception with strong subject matter support coming from all disciplines within our Extension family. But there is need for greatly intensified efforts as we attempt to reach youth with more diverse living patterns and from home and social environments which are more complex with multiple problems. The Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program can be a perfect example of this team approach to programming. We can reach the full potential of this program only by effectively utilizing a total staff effort.

Objectives of the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program

From the questions raised by State teams prior to attending this Workshop, it is important to again focus sharply on the objectives of the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program. The primary objective of this program is to help hard-to-reach families acquire the knowledge, skills and changed behavior necessary to

achieve a more adequate diet. Although the program is oriented to food and nutrition education, it recognizes that other related problems in family living must be identified and dealt with if these families are to acquire improved nutrition practices.

We recognize that as youth are involved in a relevant food-nutrition education program, they also make progress toward other personal development needs. Thus, indirectly they gain more self confidence and learn other desirable attitudes and skills. However, we must keep in mind that this specifically is a food-nutrition education program. It is not funded to encompass all areas of a total youth development program.

Let me proceed to discuss some of the other questions which were consistently raised in the questionnaire returned to Extension Service prior to the Conference. These are concerned with the role of the aide, the volunteer, the professional staff member, and the relationships among these three important contributors.

The Role of the Extension Aide

We are committed to a total family approach, including youth, in the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program. If the aide initiates her work with the homemaker, we would expect with time that attention will also be given to teaching youth in the family. Already there is much evidence of this being done in an effective manner, both on a group and individual basis. If the aide initially starts by working with the youth, we cannot afford to stop there without taking further action to reach the homemaker. Never have we had the resources and the opportunity to reinforce our Extension teaching with both youth and adults as we now have in the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program. Aides are making a significant contribution to our effort in reaching youth with nutrition education. I would like to emphasize key aspects of the aide's role in relation to 4-H type nutrition work. Here I refer to aides employed with Expanded Food Nutrition Program funds, who must devote their efforts primarily to teaching improved nutrition.

1. Serve as a Resource Person to Teach Food-Nutrition Subject Matter to low income, disadvantaged youth in 4-H and other youth groups.

While aides are not to serve as paid leaders of 4-H clubs, they can make valuable contributions as a resource person to teach food-nutrition subject matter to low income, disadvantaged youth in 4-H Clubs, in special interest groups and other youth groups. The aides are in a strategic position to encourage youth of program families to participate in nutrition education activities.

2. Identify and Recruit Volunteers to Work with Youth

With the sizable task of reaching the many low-income families who can greatly benefit from the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program, it is essential that we give increased attention to the role of volunteers. By developing this resource we can extend the potential of both the aide and the professional. The indigenous program aide may be our most effective link to recruiting indigenous volunteers. They have rapport with the potential

leader. The local people trust them. They are close by when assistance and support is needed. In most cases they have a greater knowledge of the volunteer's needs and background. I would hope that priority in our 1971 program would be given to cultivating volunteer leadership from the community where the aide is working. The volunteer leader can provide the means and lead activities which will maintain interest and participation of young people with back up support and nutrition teaching by the aide.

3. Assist with Training Volunteers

We must be cautious to make sure that the aide clearly understands her role in relation to volunteers and equally important that the volunteer understands her role as being different from the aide. We must provide training for aides to recruit and support volunteers as they perform their role. The Datagraphics evaluation report cited repeated situations where volunteers working with 4-H EFNEP had not been sufficiently trained in nutrition subject matter and especially how to work effectively with low-income disadvantaged youth.

In reviewing your questions submitted prior to the conference, we recognize the consistent concern which you have for improving this situation.

The aide can play an important role in helping improve the effective use of volunteers. Successful examples of volunteer leader training indicate that no one method is the best way to train volunteers. We would encourage you to consider a variety of approaches as a training model for volunteers in the EFNEP. Three such approaches now being used are:

- Frequent face-to-face training on a one to basis. This is being effectively done as the aide teaches a homemaker who in turn teaches youth a subject matter lesson similar to what the aide has taught her.

- Volunteers may receive training indirectly as they observe the aide teaching youth. Through observing the aide serving as a teacher, the volunteer gradually feels more confident in assuming leadership roles with the youth group.

- Small, informal training meetings for volunteers provided within the area where the aide is working is another approach to volunteer leader training to which we should give our attention. The aide may do some of the training, or she may only serve as the contact person in recruiting and being the supportive link in getting the volunteers to training sessions where the Extension professional will be responsible for training.

Based upon successes to date, we know that basic simplified lesson plans and teaching materials are needed if the indigenous volunteer is to have satisfying experiences in working with youth. Also, we cannot over-emphasize the need for specific training on how to work effectively with youth, particularly in a group situation.

The competencies of the aides, their experience in the EFNEP and the particular training needs of the volunteers should determine the degree to which aides should be involved in providing training.

No doubt the county home economist and 4-H staff are in best position to make this final determination.

We do not want to leave the impression that only indigenous volunteers can make a contribution to youth in the EFNEP. Some volunteers from outside the community and from different socio-economic groups are working effectively in this program. Much understanding can come about between individuals from different socio-economic group as an "outside" volunteer teams up with a volunteer in the neighborhood. The aide can be our vital link in helping this situation to occur.

4. Serve as a Liaison Between the Volunteer, Extension Staff and Community Resources

Are we utilizing every opportunity to move youth in the EFNEP into regular 4-H program opportunities as they are ready? If this is not happening in your State, we would encourage immediate attention be given to facilitating this transition. The aide and volunteer can serve as the reference contact for youth who are ready to move from the EFNEP into broader 4-H opportunities

in the on-going youth program or take advantage of other youth serving agencies. If this is to happen to the maximum degree we must make sure that in the training of aides, we help them know what is available through 4-H and other areas of the Extension program as well as other community resources available for youth.

Role of Professionals

We must work toward effective utilization and coordination of professional staff resources to expand nutrition education to youth and other family members in the most efficient manner. There is a need for clear role definition of professionals, but within the context of a teamwork approach to programming. Our primary objective is to assist families in improving their diets.

We cannot over-emphasize the merits of a working environment which encourages interdisciplinary effort. Yet, this doesn't mean that we have to combine 4-H and home economics to make this happen. The greatest

potential of both program areas probably lies in the uniqueness which each brings to the job. An aide working with families should be able to represent both. If the aide is to function as our link in serving low income families (adults and youth) it is only realistic that we design program responsibilities where both the home economist and the 4-H staff share some joint responsibilities in the initial training of aides and their continuous in-service and consultation training.

Summary

The potential of Extension's 4-H programs is greater now than at any time in our history. It is an important Extension responsibility in its own right--at the same time it is a part of the total Extension program. It is also a method for utilizing the youth channel in all major program areas. This team approach is especially important today.

A step we have taken to strengthen 4-H youth work from the National level has been the recent addition of three new staff members to concentrate on volunteer leadership development, urban 4-H programs, and older

4-H teenage programs. We are also providing additional technical and professional staff to help complete the National TV Series on nutrition. You can see that we are committed to giving support that you need to reach more youth who can benefit from 4-H.

I would also mention that the Extension Service 4-H Youth Staff, the National 4-H Service Committees and the National 4-H Club Foundation have been working as a team to build understanding of the potential of 4-H, in such a way as to increase both government and non-governmental resources. The active participation in this Conference of representatives from donor organizations, identified with 4-H food-nutrition work, indicates government and industry teamwork. We do appreciate the high level of private support given to 4-H food-nutrition work. An evidence of this will be our luncheon today where we are the guests of these same donor friends.

A major effort now in progress is identified as "4-H in the 70's". This emphasizes programs and procedures designed to double participation in 4-H in this decade.

The plans you develop as a State team are actually a part of this broader "4-H in the 70's" effort. You are the "prime mover" as you develop creative ideas, and then implement them in your particular situation. As you succeed, it will demonstrate Extension's ability to enrich the lives of the youth and their families, as well as being rewarding to you personally.

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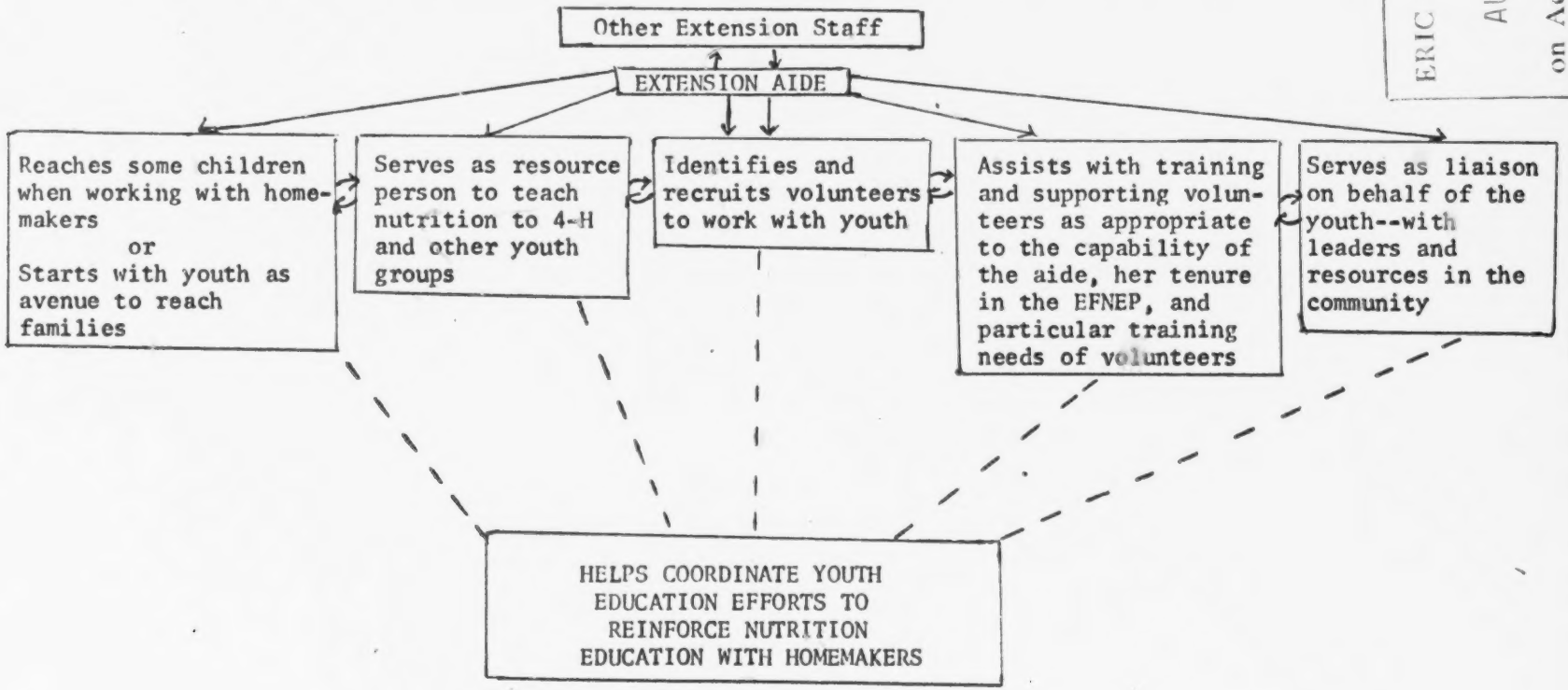
ROLE MODEL FOR EXTENSION AIDE IN RELATION TO 4-H TYPE NUTRITION PROGRAM


Other Extension Staff
EXTENSION AIDE
Reaches some children when working with homemakers
or
Starts with youth as avenue to reach families
Serves as resource person to teach nutrition to 4-H and other youth groups
Identifies and recruits volunteers to work with youth
Assists with training and supporting volunteers as appropriate to the capability of the aide, her tenure in the EFNEP, and particular training needs of volunteers
Serves as liaison on behalf of the youth--with leaders and resources in the community
HELPS COORDINATE YOUTH EDUCATION EFFORTS TO REINFORCE NUTRITION EDUCATION WITH HOMEMAKERS